

# Washington State Patrol Media Release

**Chief Ronal W. Serpas**



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## **WSP Forensic Laboratory Opens New Headquarters Office**

Chief Ronal Serpas announced today the official opening of the new Washington State Patrol Forensic Laboratory Bureau Headquarters in Seattle, housing the Crime Laboratory and State Toxicology Laboratory.

The building has a surprising history, built on what were formerly Seattle tidelands. Until the Denny regrade, the building was originally the Frye meat packing plant. In February 1943, Boeing's top secret XB-29, the prototype of the B-29 superfortress, caught fire after taking off from Boeing Field and crash-landed on top of the building, killing the crew and 19 workers (see <http://www.historylink.org/> for pictures).

In the last two years, it has been completely gutted and remodeled, at a total project cost to the state of \$13 million. It provides over 48,000 square feet of state-of-the-art forensic laboratory space, including:

- Six evidence exam rooms to allow separation of suspect and victim evidence.
- 3,500 square feet of evidence storage space.
- Laboratory space for 56 scientists (currently 48).
- Desk and sterile office space for 80 staff (currently 70).
- Administrative Headquarters for the FLSB Bureau staff—the only WSP bureau headquartered outside of Olympia.
- In addition to housing drug chemistry, arson, trace evidence, document examination, meth lab, and DNA analysis, it brings firearms analysis capability back to Seattle, transferred to Marysville in 1994 because of lead issues in the Public Safety Building. The new unit will accommodate three firearms examiners and houses a computer terminal for the Integrated Ballistics Information System cartridge case and bullet database.

Some of the recent accomplishments of the Seattle Crime Lab include:

- 52 DNA hits between tested evidence and profiles in the state or national databases. These include the murders of Sylvia Durante, Denise Casteneda, Penelope Hermans, Gladys Bayne, and many others.
- Testing of 278 no-suspect DNA cases as a match for \$1.3 million federal grant for database backlog elimination.
- A recent concentrated effort by the scientists in the chemistry section brought the drug case backlog down from 1,900 cases to 714, with a median turnaround time of only 18 days.

The State Patrol is proud to have such a state-of-the-art facility that helps makes a difference for the criminal justice community.

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